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Commission on Sustainable Development acting as the preparatory committee for the World Summit on Sustainable Development
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Consideration of the Chairman's paper transmitted from the second session of the Commission acting as the preparatory committee, together with other relevant inputs to the preparatory process

Letter dated 15 March 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Cape Verde addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that the Government of the Republic of Cape Verde has just hosted in Praia, from 7 to 8 March 2002, a ministerial forum on the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, in the context of the preparatory process for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, to be held in Johannesburg from 26 August to 4 September 2002.

The forum, which was attended by delegates from both developing and developed country parties to the Convention, adopted the Ministerial Message from Praia, a copy of which is attached (see annex I), together with a copy of the conclusions and recommendations of the technical segment of the forum (see annex II).

The forum mandated to H.E. Mr. Pedro Verona Rodrigues Pires, President of the Republic of Cape Verde, to convey the said message to the Summit and its preparatory process for consideration.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annexes circulated as a document of the Summit and its remaining two preparatory sessions.

(*Signed*) Luis da **Fonseca**
Ambassador

* A/CONF.199/PC/1.

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Annex I to the letter dated 15 March 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Cape Verde addressed to the Secretary-General

MINISTERIAL FORUM ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNCCD PREPARATORY TO THE WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

We, Ministers, Heads of Delegations of country Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those countries affected by serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, meeting in Praia from 7 to 8 March 2002 at the invitation of the Government of the Republic of Cape Verde in the context of the preparatory process to the World Summit on Sustainable Development scheduled to take place in Johannesburg from 26 August to 4 September 2002, give mandate to the President, His Excellency Mr. Pedro Rodrigues Pires to convey the following message to the WSSD and its preparatory process.

The Ministerial Message from Praia

Considering that desertification is one of the main aggravating circumstances of poverty, due to *inter-alia*, close linkages between land degradation and poverty in arid, semi-arid and the dry sub-humid areas.

Considering that those linkages constitute a serious threat to the livelihood of hundreds of millions of peoples living in those areas.

Recalling that the Convention to Combat Desertification constitutes an innovative and invaluable tool to achieve the objectives of sustainable development as provided by Agenda 21, and those related to poverty eradication as contained in the Millennium Declaration,

Considering that the conclusions of the Ministerial and High-level interactive dialogue on the relationship between combating desertification and eradication of poverty, held in Geneva during the fifth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, have been submitted to the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee of the Johannesburg Summit and thereafter introduced at its second session on 28 January 2002 in New York by the Secretariat of the Convention,

Considering the conclusions of the High Level Forum of cooperation between Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean on the strengthening of the south south cooperation in the framework of the UNCCD held in Caracas from 18 to 20 February 2002,

Considering the Agadez Call made on 28 February 2002 by the Panel of Eminent Personalities on the nexus between poverty and environment in the context of a timely and effective implementation of the UNCCD,

Aware that combating desertification constitutes a challenge to the international community and that the unchecked land degradation impedes important efforts already made by our Governments to achieve objectives of sustainable development.

Considering the importance of the implementation of Action Programmes at national, sub-regional and regional levels in achieving the sustainable development objectives, in particular, in combating poverty in general,

Considering the need to further the synergies between the Rio Conventions as well as the need for a better coherence between those conventions and other planning frameworks for better coordination of the involvement of the partners in countries affected by desertification and poverty,

Considering that NEPAD is a policy framework conceived to eradicate poverty and to promote a sustained economic growth of African Parties to the UNCCD,

Invite the Johannesburg Summit to :

1. *Declare* the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification as an important instrument to eradicate poverty in arid, semi-arid and the dry sub-humid regions of our planet,

2. *Reaffirm* that the fight against desertification takes place downstream and upstream of all poverty eradication strategies, and, in this regard, should be featured prominently in the new Action Programme for Sustainable Development to be discussed at the Johannesburg Summit,

3. *Recommend country Parties to commit* themselves to their respective sustainable development policies in resource mobilisation, including from the national budget, for the implementation of National Action Programmes. It is also worth noting with satisfaction the existence of a political will, particularly demonstrated through the measures taken by the affected country Parties to develop such programmes in addition to implementing important institutional and legislative reforms and to pursue them to create an enabling environment;

4. *Urge* the International Community particularly bilateral and multilateral donors, to grant the necessary financial resources while upgrading individual and collective capacities for the successful implementation of the National Action Programmes and by integrating those actions in poverty eradication strategies;

5. *Take note of* the various decisions adopted by the Council of the Global Environmental Facility in order to strengthen financial support of the Facility to the implementation of the UNCCD and express the wish that the GEF Assembly, considering the need for new and additional financial resources, will be able to amend the instrument of the Facility to include land degradation (desertification and deforestation) as the fifth focal area.

6. *Also take note* of the appeal launched by Ministers of Africa, Asia, Latin-America and the Caribbean during the various regional meetings preparatory

to the Johannesburg Summit, held respectively in Nairobi, Phnom Penh, Rio de Janeiro, whereby the GEF Assembly scheduled to take place in Beijing, China, in October 2002, is invited to identify the Facility as a financial mechanism of the Convention,

7. *Note* with satisfaction the continuous developing co-operation between the secretariats of the Rio Conventions and with other relevant treaties and encourage them to pursue such efforts in our countries. We are convinced that more efforts need to be made at the national level for enhanced coherence and coordination in the implementation of those conventions of which our countries are ultimately the sovereign actors,

8. *Emphasise* the existing linkage between trade and environment and request that products from arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas be adequately integrated into world trade.

9. *Support* and promote the relevant elements of NEPAD with a view to enhancing priority actions aimed at combating desertification.

Praia, 8 March 2002

Annex II to the letter dated 15 March 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Cape Verde addressed to the Secretary-General

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TECHNICAL SEGMENT OF THE PRAIA FORUM ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION (CCD), PREPARATORY TO THE WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The representatives of Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in countries severely affected by drought and on desertification, participating in the technical segment of the Forum held in Praia, Republic of Cape Verde from 5 to 8 March 2002 in preparation for the World Summit on Sustainable Development[1] (Johannesburg 2002), having reviewed the relevant documents on the status of the UNCCD,

Reiterate their support to Decision 8/COP.5 transmitting the conclusions of the high-level interactive dialogue session of the Conference of the Parties (COP) and the summary of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the implementation of the Convention to the World Summit on Sustainable Development,

Agree to adopt the following conclusions and recommendations,

Express the hope that the participants at the high-level segments of the Praia Forum will take account of the conclusions and recommendations of the Forum, integrate them in their preparations for the World Summit on Sustainable Development and transmit the messages presented hereafter through the appropriate channel.

A. PREPARATORY PROCESS OF THE WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

CONCLUSIONS

The poverty nexus mainly corresponds to that of desertification and drought. Whereas issues concerning the survival of destitute populations in dry lands constitute a matter of urgency, the solutions must reflect the longer-term environmental requirements. In fact, land degradation and the attendant losses create a vicious circle. This dilemma constitutes the main thrust of the challenge to sustainable development and the UNCCD is an instrument endowed with considerable potential to provide the most

[1] Decision 8/COP.5

appropriate solutions. One important challenge to be met by the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development (Rio + 10) ties in upgrading this potential.

The outcomes of COP.5, especially as contained in Decisions 3/COP.5 and 8/COP.5, offer a solid basis for orientation of the UNCCD. As such these results are worth integrating into the proceeding and follow-up activities of the World Summit (Rio + 10). Similarly, they should always be brought to the attention of the UNCCD Committee to Review the Implementation (CRIC) so as to inspire the COP.6 decisions concerning the implementation of the Convention.

I. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The individual initiative of each country is necessary. The participation of UNCCD focal points in this process must be encouraged. In addition to the initiatives taken by the COP, the country Parties are instantly urged to give priority to UNCCD in the various forums of the preparatory process for the Summit and in other structures such as those of the Global Environment Facility, NEPAD, ICFFD, the World Summit on Food Security and the forums of other Conventions.

2. The Secretariat is requested to carry on with its facilitation efforts in the context of Decision 8/COP.5 so that the Summit gives political impetus to UNCCD since the Convention is currently in a delicate transitional phase between the programming and implementation processes.

3. Participants at the Johannesburg Summit are requested to give due priority to UNCCD by considering, in particular, the close linkages that its implementation will forge between priority sectors such as forestry, water management, food security, energy, maintenance of carbon sinks, conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

ENABLING FRAMEWORK

CONCLUSIONS

The National Action Programme (NAP) development process, particularly in the fields of awareness creation and participation at the institutional level, is an important achievement that should be preserved and consolidated. During the first implementation phase of the NAPs, a number of induced effects were already considered positive. These include: promoting the participatory approach in support of decentralization process, rising decentralized authorities' awareness of integrating themes concerning linkages between development and natural resource conservation, initiation of the process for harmonization of laws and statutory provisions in force and improved coordination of the ministries concerned in certain cases.

The civil society actors concerned should be mobilized through authentic participatory process and however precious it may be, the experience acquired can still be improved.

The participatory approaches will be supported by national decentralization policies on natural resources management and improvement of land tenure systems. They were also contingent on a process of enhanced solidarity that will be expressed when the partnership agreements are effectively concluded between Parties.

Coordination and consultation are essential requirements for the fulfilment of the complex obligations incumbent on the countries as a result of the diverse procedures laid down by donors, the numerous commitments emanating from international treaties and politic strategic frameworks that occasionally lead to duplication of fractions. UNCCD offers a privileged legislative framework that facilitates consultation in countries plagued by land degradation and poverty.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

4. Strengthen or develop at the appropriate level coordinating mechanisms that will forge closer links between the ministries and departments in charge of the key sectors between governments and non-governmental organizations and with the science community, local communities and the private sector, insofar as these mechanisms will support the consultative process to be established between Parties to include partnership arrangements. Co-ordination among donors should also be strengthened.

5. Develop legislation that will guarantee a more decentralized management of natural resources and support new outreach activities for participatory implementation of UNCCD while recognizing the vital contribution of elected representatives at central and local government levels, the potential of youth and the essential role played by women in matters concerning natural resource management.

FRAMEWORK FOR INTEGRATING POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

CONCLUSIONS

In view of the precarious socio-economic conditions of people living in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas, who are marginalized by poverty and affected by desertification and drought, it is necessary to establish linkages between priorities among the actions to combat desertification and those aimed at reducing poverty in order to develop a joint approach to sustainable development.

The coordination should be done in the countries. Even though the multiplicity of planning instruments creates problems of harmonization and coordination for the countries, the establishment of the consultative mechanisms envisaged in the UNCCD provisions will ensure a better coordination for the integration of strategic frameworks. In the countries predominantly characterized by dry ecosystems, UNCCD is the appropriate instrument to guarantee the transition between sector-based approaches and integrated management of lands defined in terms of biophysical, social, land-use and economic considerations.

In this context, the establishment of a programme of synergies in the field between the Rio Conventions and other relevant instruments, such as the United Nations Forum on Forestry, will be facilitated through the full application of the UNCCD provisions which have the potential of promoting between management of natural resources (land, water, forests, biomass, biodiversity, carbon sinks) and sustainable development policies. Funding, exchange of information and technology between the various Conventions should be emphasized while maintaining the independence of the Conventions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

6. Build the affected country Parties' capacity to integrate national programmes to combat desertification into broader sustainable development and poverty reduction mechanisms reflecting economic and environmental considerations, while ensuring that the organizations promoting such mechanisms are actively involved in the Parties' initiatives.

7. Provide support for improved articulation of planning instruments of the Conventions and forums and economic sectors with national plans for sustainable development and poverty alleviation based on the general rules governing the harmonization of the strategic frameworks aimed at simplifying the implementation process. This implies a process for the review and rationalization of the national legal mechanism.

8. Harmonize policies, strategies and programmes in the field of land use, integrated ecosystem management, sustainable agricultural and rural development and integrated management of energy and water resources while involving the ministries of finance and planning in this effort.

9. Corrective measures for adapting and reducing greenhouse gases under the Kyoto Protocol and the Framework Convention on Climate Change, and related financial mechanisms, should now fully use and integrate the measures provided under UNCCD NAPs, in agreement with UNCCD focal points. For instance, in arid areas, NAPs and National Action Programmes for Adaptation (NAPA) to climate change often cover the same materials and should be integrated to avoid the scattering of initiatives, which could lead to wastage of resources.

10. Promote a better understanding of the potential of interactions between trade and environment as recognized by the World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial Conference in Doha, Qatar, so as to ensure sustainable development of the productive capital of arid areas and avoid the subsidy policies that distort the functioning of the market forces.

11. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) can greatly contribute to integrating the fight against desertification in the sustainable development strategies, and the UNCCD Secretariat and the Global Mechanism are invited to promote relevant issues in this context.

PARTNERSHIP AND FUNDING

CONCLUSIONS

The dialogue and partnership among the Parties should define frameworks of consensus in order to channel priority investments to the areas affected by poverty and desertification and provide the necessary support to capacity building and technology transfer. This expected dialogue is likely to enhance the cohesion of policies, harmonization of procedures, transparency, cutting transaction costs and

ownership of programmes. In this regard, the COPs call should be better heeded by development agencies in developed countries Parties to the Convention.

The effective implementation of NAPs, as well as that of the other programming instruments under the Rio Conventions, will greatly hinge on the international community's ability to mobilize adequate resources. The implementation of NAPs is subject to the mobilization of sufficient new and additional resources. Participants at the Johannesburg Summit are invited to make a clear statement in this respect.

RECOMMENDATIONS

12. Adopt provisions for combating land and water degradation in state and public community budgets.

13. Invite the Parties to promote the establishment of flexible consultation mechanisms at country level to foster partnership agreements among the Parties and effective follow-up of such agreements to accompany the NAPs.

14. Continue, in the framework of the GEF, to adopt enabling measures to combat desertification, with the hope to mobilize additional resources for land degradation (deforestation/desertification) while encouraging the simplification of modalities for the disbursement of various GEF funds aimed at solving the same problems.

15. Mobilize without delay additional funding resources and investments through the Global Mechanism by earmarking the financial flows from bilateral development agencies, private foundations, development funds and the private sector.

16. Support, through local investments, the integration of funding processes, which enable the full implementation of UNCCD in a specific framework with regard to environment, social sector and land tenure, for a participatory management of natural resources, in pursuance of the principles of sustainable development.

17. Facilitate local populations' access to adequate financial resources and technologies so as to enable them to alternative income generating activities and fight against poverty.

SUB-REGIONAL AND REGIONAL COOPERATION

CONCLUSIONS

Cooperation at sub-regional and regional levels particularly allows for cross-border cooperation in the management of arid ecosystems and disseminate knowledge on best practices, innovative technologies and transferable traditional technologies.

South-South initiatives supporting the sharing of experiences are vital elements in the capacity building and technology transfer, and contribute to enhancing sub-regional and regional cooperation in order to facilitate access to technologies. The experience acquired by some affected Parties, as well as by certain sub-regional and regional organisations in combating desertification or in the most appropriate practices for implementation of the UNCCD, deserve to be popularized developed and supported by relevant organizations through financial assistance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

18. Support CST activities and build the capacities of sub-regional and regional organizations through South-South and North-South partnerships, by calling on developed countries to encourage the participation of their scientific institutions along with institutions of developing countries in the UNCCD's regional and sub-regional action programmes.

19. Promote capacity building for the civil society at regional and sub-regional level through South-South and North-South co-operation in the implementation of the UNCCD

20. Promote the establishment of regional UNCCD thematic networks, particularly to enable them to a) valorize traditional knowledge and technologies and replicate existing best practices and methods; b) serve as pillars for inter-regional cooperation platforms as provided in the Caracas Declaration

TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER AND CAPACITY BUILDING

CONCLUSIONS

Developing countries affected by desertification and other countries Parties concerned should be helped to build their human, institutional and technical capacities in order to enable them to make better use of their natural resources and for sustainable development.

A holistic concept of the fight against land degradation, desertification and drought requires on one hand, the promotion of synergies with the other Rio Conventions, and on the other hand, the acquisition of technologies, extended capacities and skills;

RECOMMENDATIONS

21. The countries, organisations and institutions are invited to scientific cooperation with specialized programmes, and to facilitate technology and information transfer in the priority areas for combating desertification, which will also contribute to meeting the demand for carbon sinks under the Kyoto Protocol and conservation of biodiversity.

22. Support training geared to the development and implementation of benchmarks and indicators on desertification, the use of Geographic Information System (GIS) and environmental impact indicators to facilitate the process of monitoring and evaluation, which will contribute to the work of the UNCCD's subsidiary bodies.